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of business enterprise
from an historical point of view

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BULLETIN OF THE BUSINESS HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.

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The Business History Foundation, Inc.

A new research organization in the field of business history has recently been established, the Business History Foundation, Inc. Chartered under the membership corporations law of the State of New York as a non-profit organization, the Foundation is designed to carry on and facilitate research in the history of business and to assist in the publication of the results of such research. It will be financed by gifts from individuals, institutions, and companies.

The Foundation is an outgrowth of the research in the history of business that has in the past two decades been carried on under the direction of Professor N. S. B. Gras at the Graduate School of Business Administration of Harvard University. From the beginning the work in business history at the Harvard Business School has been based on the conviction that the study of the business man and unit at work, from original business records, is the first essential in the development of business history and that the heart of that study is found in the administration of the unit. Since the history of business had not previously been approached in this way, it became necessary to begin at the bottom and build up a body of information through research in the lives of business men and the history of firms. Professor Gras believed that only in this way could the basis for more general studies in the history of business be laid.

In the course of the years a considerable group of men and women have worked with Professor Gras. The published results are the twelve volumes of *Harvard Studies in Business History*, Gras' *Business and Capitalism*, and Gras and Larson's *Casebook in American Business History*, together with numerous articles which have appeared in the *Journal of Economic and Business History*, the *Bulletin of the Business Historical Society*, and other publications.

A wide interest in business history has in the meantime developed throughout the country. The attitude of many business men has changed from one of distrust of the historian and neglect

of history to an interest in coöperating with the scholar in making known to business, to the student, and to the public generally the past history of their companies. A number of scholars outside the Harvard group have also turned to business history, and several leading universities have established courses of instruction in the subject. Learned and popular publications, alike, have for several years manifested an increasing interest in the history of the administration and operation of business. In effect, interest in business history is in the process of developing into a "movement," in both business and academic circles. The growing interest in business history has highlighted the over-all problem of providing through research the factual information which is needed to keep the subject on a high plane and to forestall the development of a superficial treatment of business history which could be fatal to the realization of the substantial promise now existing.

Unfortunately there are serious difficulties in the way of supplying that fund of information. To begin with, there is the problem of financing research and study in a field which is so new that it does not have access to the traditional sources of aid for scholarly research and publication. The alternative has of necessity been to turn to business itself for financial aid, but when that is done there arises the problem of maintaining the independence of the researcher. Further problems arise out of the fact that the business historian must to a large extent work in the records of living firms; only high social-mindedness on the part of a company's executives and scholarly objectivity and responsibility on the part of the scholar can eventuate in studies that are fair both to the company and to the scholar.

There is, moreover, the very serious problem of carrying on the large special research that would be involved in writing the history of a great modern corporation or holding company. No one scholar could get far in the study of the history of, let us say, the United States Steel Corporation. Yet without studies of some great concerns, business history would fall far short of meeting the need for information about the background of our present business system. Such studies involve problems of research and the financing of research which neither an individual nor even a large university could adequately handle.

The Business History Foundation, or some such organization, is necessary because of three situations. First, there must be

trained an experienced staff of researchers and writers in the field of business history who can turn from one project to another with the fullness of knowledge of methods and ideals. Second, some special organization is required to direct and be responsible for each large piece of work. And, third, one organization is required to stand between the scholar and the sponsor of research so as to assure independence in study and writing.

The trustees of the Foundation are as follows: Dr. Joseph H. Appel, retired executive of the Wanamaker stores, author, and trustee of Franklin and Marshall College; Dean Ray Palmer Baker of Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute; Professor N. S. B. Gras and Associate Professor Henrietta M. Larson of the Graduate School of Business Administration, Harvard University; and Dr. Charles W. Moore, assistant vice-president of SKF Industries, Inc. Professor Gras is president of the Foundation and Dr. Larson, on leave from Harvard, will serve as executive vice-president. The offices of the corporation will be in New York.

The Foundation has already arranged to assist in various undertakings, but its first large project will be the preparation of a history of the Standard Oil Co. (N.J.). This project was decided upon only after more than a year's exploratory study of its feasibility and importance. The company has made a gift to the Foundation to facilitate its work.

This project is planned to take at least five years and to result in no less than four volumes. The work will be done by a group of scholars including Professor Ralph W. Hidy and Professor Muriel Hidy of Wheaton College, Mrs. Evelyn H. Knowlton, Mr. George W. Gibb, and Mr. John S. Ewing of the Graduate School of Business Administration of Harvard University, and Dr. Charles S. Popple, formerly also of that School. Dr. Larson will be in charge for three years and will also participate in the research and writing. Professor Gras will act in a consulting capacity until retirement at Harvard frees him for more active participation.

The Standard Oil Co. (N.J.) will make its records available to these scholars, and the authors will decide what the facts are and determine the manner of presentation. The research will be exhaustive, the presentation candid, and publication unrestricted. The object will be the discovery of past activities and present trends, old mistakes and new challenges, private action and public sanction, organization and control, with emphasis on policy and

management over the many decades of the Company's existence. Always the facts will be presented against the background of the times.

In opening its records to scholars the Standard Oil Co. (N.J.) is placing its support behind a new development in the social sciences. Business has long furthered research in the natural sciences, particularly in engineering. Many deans of schools of business have recommended the same emphasis in the social sciences. The Standard Oil Co. (N.J.) is doing precisely this without lessening its support of the natural sciences. To be sure, it is not the development of the natural sciences which has brought danger to our civilization, but rather the fact that the social sciences have not developed adequately to cope with the problems resulting from changes based upon discoveries in the natural sciences. This deficiency is notably true of modern business, which historian and economist, alike, have almost wholly neglected.

The logical summary of the Foundation's purpose is to provide facts for the building up of the social sciences, in the broad meaning of that discipline. There will be no lecturing; no magazines will be published; and no impressionistic history will be written. On the whole, it may be expected that the books resulting from the work of the Foundation will provide raw material and carefully formulated generalization which will aid business men, historians, and other social scientists to broaden their base, deepen their perspective, and increase their sense of historical relativity.

It seems fitting that America, which has led in the scientific study of business techniques, should also lead in the study of business statesmanship and should recognize that in the pursuit of wise policies and broad dispositions it is necessary to have a sound, factual, and documentary background in the development of business. It may well be that the understanding which business man, student, and public, alike, will gain from the study of the history of the administrator of business and of the place of business in the history of the western world may have a broad significance. The new Foundation is expected to aid in a development which may change the traditional attitude of disdain for and distrust of business to a desire the better to understand and administer our business system. Thus a cultural lag which cuts deep in modern society would in some measure be corrected.

HENRIETTA M. LARSON,
Harvard University.

Advertising in the Grand Manner

Institutional advertising, that artful device for infiltrating the subconscious, is capable of assuming a myriad of forms. A firm may use it to keep its name frequently before the public—the American Telephone and Telegraph Company is an example of first magnitude—or a segment of an industry, the nation's privately owned utility companies, for instance, may seek to promote their mutual interests. Sometimes the appeal may be purposefully direct: in 1905, N. W. Ayer & Son undertook the specific task of reestablishing public confidence in the New York Mutual Life Insurance Company after the devastating investigation of the Armstrong committee. At other times the approach may be subtly indirect: the State of Arizona, although making no declaration of its purpose, sets lures for tourists on the brightly colored pages of its official magazine, *Arizona Highways*.

On but few occasions has institutional advertising in this country been conducted on a national level. A notable example occurred during the recent war when, in an effort to sell War Bonds, the Treasury Department extolled the merits and glory of these United States. In France, however, there has been in existence for over thirty-five years a company which has specialized in institutional advertising of this sort. The firm was organized in 1911 by M. Maurice Devriès under the name *Établissements M. D.* Its stated aim has been "the propagation of the cult of French grandeur." Its methods of achieving this goal have been by no means ordinary.

At first M. Devriès acted as a semi-official agent of the French government, arranging for displays representing France at various exhibitions such as those at Amsterdam and Rotterdam in the Netherlands and at Bari in Italy. His most notable success during this period was the exhibit which he entitled "The Gallery of French Taste." The Gallery consisted of 2,500 colored glass slides mounted on boxes that had been wired for lighting. The exhibit was to be laid out in a darkened room, the only illumination coming through the colored panes of glass, like the sunlight at Chartres. The slides represented scenes and products photo-

graphed at the workshops of a number of famed French artisans. Included in the group were such trades as jewelry-making, bronze-working, cabinet-making, carriage-building, and of course dressmaking. An effort was made to emphasize those industries for which France was best known abroad.

Three sets of slides were assembled. One was displayed in Paris for three years (from 1921 to 1923). Another was set up on board the cruiser *Jules Michelet* and was taken on a two-year cruise around the world. The third was shipped to the United States where it was exhibited in the Philadelphia and New York stores of John Wanamaker.

Turning from government-sponsored work in the 1930's M. Devriès initiated a service designed to assist private and public organizations in commemorating their past. The town of Versailles commissioned him to plan and print an elaborate memorial folder to be presented on ceremonial occasions to visitors of rank. Similarly the Rhine Navigation Company engaged his services to collect and reproduce some of the interesting and significant events in the history of Rhenish navigation. Here was an approach to business history with an accent on the artistic.

From his experience with these special assignments M. Devriès conceived the idea of a series of albums in which he would strive to commemorate French history in the same way that he had recorded the history of the Rhine. He planned to publish twelve albums, of which seven have appeared to date.

Material for these albums has been obtained from libraries, museums, government record offices and private collections, both within France and without. Documents and letters have been reproduced in these albums with a wizardry that has preserved the wrinkles and torn places, the stains and faded spots, with the full flavor of authenticity. Each reproduction is mounted with such individual care and with such studied informality that the purchaser of an album is made to feel that it has been arranged and prepared especially for him.

The Business Historical Society has recently received a gift of five of these albums from Mr. Joseph H. Appel, at one time director of advertising and publicity, and later executive manager, of the Wanamaker store in New York. Mr. Appel has seen in these publications something unique in the field of advertising and has arranged through the Society to have these albums deposited in Baker Library as documents in the history of advertising.

The five albums differ widely in subject matter. One consists of letters and documents concerning the first World War. A second has the appearance of a scrapbook such as might have been kept during the second World War by a well-informed citizen with an awareness of and an access to the most significant pictures and documents of the period. A third deals with the history of French colonization.

Perhaps the most interesting to Americans are the remaining two albums, which reproduce the letters of the famous in history. The American publishing firm of Simon & Shuster a few years ago issued two volumes of such letters, but in translation and in printed form. M. Devriès' albums accomplish what printed books cannot do: they perpetuate the pen style of the author and preserve something of the reality of the occasion on which the letter was written. One of the volumes deals principally with historical figures; it contains a reproduction of one of the five extant letters believed to have been signed by Jeanne d'Arc (the signature JOHANNE is written in large, unsteady script), as well as Louis XVI's and Marie Antoinette's last letters before being led to the guillotine.

The letters in the other album are those of well-known artists: an amorous letter from poet Alfred de Musset to George Sand, another from Richard Wagner to the daughter of novelist Théophile Gautier, a penitent letter from Paul Verlaine to a friend, confessing his past perversions, and a dozen others.

Limited as might be thought the appeal of these publications, the demand for them has in fact been phenomenal. The seven albums so far issued have sold on an average of 20,000 copies each, a figure which in this country would be considered of best-seller proportions. This recognition has been achieved despite the fact that M. Devriès, who is himself an advertising man in the grandest manner, makes no effort to promote the sale of his publications. As a result he has reached only a limited market outside France and is almost unknown in the United States. His works are, however, available to anyone who wishes to write to M. Maurice Devriès, 22 Rue de l'Arcade, Paris, France. Among the five albums planned for future publication will be one on the libraries of French industry and another on radio programs. The price of each album is equivalent to approximately \$2.00 at the current rate of exchange.

THOMAS R. NAVIN, JR.,
Harvard University.

The Woodwell Shipyard, 1759 - 1852

The original settlement at Newbury, Massachusetts, in 1635 was along the Parker River and, although it was an agricultural community, small vessels were built there as early as 1680. The greater facilities of the area fronting the Merrimack, known as the "Port," caused that section to increase in population and commerce, but not until 1764 was this locality cut off from old Newbury and incorporated as Newburyport.

This town, stretching for a distance of nearly two miles along the south bank of the Merrimack River, was ideally situated for the construction of ships, and for maritime pursuits, in the days when sailing vessels carried the commerce of New England and fleets were engaged in fishing. The virgin forests of New Hampshire and Maine, with their abundance of hardwood for ships' timbers and planks and straight pine for masts and spars, were within easy reach. Unfortunately shifting sand bars at the river's mouth became a hazard to navigation and destroyed its value as a port after the increase in tonnage of vessels and the supplanting of sail by steam.

There were periods in Newburyport's history when all available space along the river was occupied by shipyards and wharves. Sarah Anna Emery, in her *Reminiscences of a Nonagenarian*, states: "In the summer of 1766 seventy-two vessels were upon the stocks, all in process of construction." In the *History of Newburyport* by Caleb Cushing (published in 1826), this statement is made: "Old inhabitants of the town can remember when there have been a hundred vessels building at one time along the banks of the river on the Newbury side below the [Essex-Merrimack] bridge." These statements are the more remarkable when it is remembered that in early days ships were not assembled, but literally handmade, with broadaxe, saw, maul, and adz and without benefit of power machinery.

The Woodwell shipbuilding had its beginning in the work of Thomas and William Johnson, probably brothers, who had come to Newbury from Charlestown, Massachusetts, prior to 1700, and

were among its earliest shipbuilders. While the fact cannot be established, it is a family tradition that Gideon—one of three little children of a woman whose husband had died of smallpox in the epidemic of 1722—was at the age of eight brought to Newbury and given a home with one of the Johnson families, who were relatives on the boy's mother's side. Family tradition holds also that upon reaching the proper age he was trained by them as ship carpenter, no doubt serving an apprenticeship.

In 1754-56 Gideon Woodwell was 1st Lieutenant in the regiment of Colonel Jonathan Bagley, stationed at Fort William Henry in the expedition against Crown Point. The men in his company were from Newbury, and in March, 1756, he was given a special commission by Governor William Shirley, General and Commander in Chief of his Majesty's Forces in North America,



The Woodwell Home, Newburyport, Massachusetts

and placed in charge of a company of shipwrights and mechanics, who, during that summer, built three sloops and several hundred whale boats for the transportation of troops and munitions of war to Fort Ticonderoga. It is evident that Gideon's experience as a shipbuilder was sufficient to recommend him for that duty.

Upon his return to Newbury from two years of military service, Gideon worked in other shipyards, and by 1759, if not earlier, he was operating his own yard. An original account book, which was kept by him from 1755 to 1770, gives us some insight into his operations.

This account book shows that Woodwell conducted a general-store business side by side with his shipbuilding. Presumably the

two lines of business were closely interlinked. These records also show that he advanced cash and accepted orders for the payment of sums of money. Two kinds of money appear in his record: old tenor and new tenor (also called lawful money). In 1757 one pound new tenor was equal to $7\frac{1}{2}$ pounds old tenor.

This, to us, strange mixture of business was no doubt a result of the conditions of the time. English goods needed by the Colonists, including cloth of all kinds, tea, dishes, and other manufactured articles were imported from England, to which country ships' masts were exported. To obtain funds for this largely one-way trade, and also needed supplies, the port towns developed an extensive business with the West Indies, particularly with the French and Spanish islands. The hundreds of small ships engaging in this trade carried wood staves for barrels and leather, beef, pork, mutton, and fish to the islands and brought back limes, raisins, rice, and especially sugar, molasses and rum.

At that time money was scarce and there were no banks. Business was conducted generally by the barter system, and "English" and "West India" goods figured in many transactions. And since there were no banks, merchants and other business men had to supply banking functions. This situation probably explains the strange mixture of business recorded in Gideon Woodwell's account book. However, there is no reason to believe that his system of trading or his shipbuilding methods were unique or even that they differed from the common practice at that period.

While this book is quite inadequate as a record of Woodwell's shipbuilding work, it shows many credits for services and supplies furnished to him and reveals interesting information about the manner in which work was carried on at that early date, giving rates of pay for labor and cost of materials.

The following items are transcribed from his account book:

1759.	Jonathan Noys Credit to sixty-seven Days work at £1—8 pr Day	£ 87- 2-0
1764.	Nathaniel Knap. Credit to calking one half of a ship that I built for Robert Jenkins one hindred and eliven tuns at twenty-four shillings pr tun, old tenner	£ 137- 3-0
1764.	Ephreum Hunt Credit by your a Count Rendred in for one hundred and fifty inches of spars and for a foot of ship's mast	£ 87-10-0
	Three schooners mast and spars	£ 154- 2-0
1764.	William Henscy & Hugh Godsel Credit to account brough in for sawing schooner 1290 feet	£ 38-14-0
	and for sawing the ship 4495 feet	£ 134-17-0

1765.	Stephen Russel Credit to too thousand nine hundred & ninety seven feet 2-1/2 plank at 65 pr thousand	£ 194-16-3
1765.	James Bricket Credit to 8 tuns & 8 ft of wales at 9 pr tun	£ 73-16-0
	to a keele 73 ft at 12 pr tun	£ 21-18-0
1765.	John Britt Credit to building a figer head to the ship Romeoh	£ 60- 0-0
	& to building open gallerys	£ 75- 0-0
1765.	Eleazer Keeser Credit to the building too thirds of one half of a ship 211 tun at ten pounds ten shillings pr tun	£ 730-10-0
	& to building one half of a ship 211 tuns at ten pounds ten shillings pr tun	£1107-15-0
	& to Laying Mr. Groves schooners Deck	80- 0-0
		1898- 5-0
	to sheething one quarter of a ship	45- 0-0
	to your part planking Mr Elveys schooner two thirds of one side	73- 6-8
		2016-11-8
	to building one quarter Groves schooner	133-17-6
	To planking one third of one side of Dodges schooner ..	34- 0-0
	to squaring one side Brig you & Swazey	11- 5-0
	to layin one half of the Brigs Decks you & Swayzey your part	58-10-0
		2254- 4-6
	to twenty pound by your sun John	20- 0-0
	to one half main Deck of Capt. Gwins sloop	22-10-0
	to the one half of Quarter Deck	11- 5-0
		2307-19-6
	to the half of Manins starn	8- 0-0
	to 28 Days at 40 pr day	56- 0-0
	to 28 at 35 pr day	42- 0-0
	to 58 Days work of sun John at 32-6	95-15-0
	to 2 takel Blocks & makeing trunils	6- 0-0
		2515-14-6
1765.	Benjamin Rolph Credit to the building one half of a schooner 59 tuns at ten pounds ten shillings pr tun old temer	309-15-0
	to the building one third part of a schooner 54 tuns at ten pounds ten shillings pr tun	189- 0-0
1766.	to the building one Quarter of a schooner 52 tuns at ten pounds ten shillings	137-16-3
	& to six Days & half work	13-10-0
1765.	Nathan Poore Credit to the building one half of a schooner 59 tuns at ten pounds ten shillings pr tun	309-15-0
	to the building one third of a schooner 54 tuns	189- 0-0

1766.	to the building one Quarter of a schooner 52 tuns at ten pounds ten shillings	137-16-3
	to sundry Days work Brough in	19- 1-10
	to a days work of you & Boys Lanching	4-10-0
1765.	Thomas Moody Credit to one third of Capt. Cooke schooner	£ 189- 0-0
1766.	to one Quarter of a schooner 52 tuns	137-16-3
(Note) From the preceding accounts it appears that Rolph and Poore together built a 59 ton schooner at a labor cost of 619 pounds 10 shillings. These two, with Moody built a schooner of 54 tons at a labor cost of 567 pounds. The same three men build three quarter of a 52 ton schooner at a labor cost totalling 551 pounds.		
1766.	Ebenezer Chanler Credit to planking one third of one side Mr. Ebrys schooner	£ 36-13-4
	& to building one Quarter of a schooner	133-17-6
1766.	Ephram Hunt Credit to your Account Brough in too schooners mast	96- 0-0
	& a Brigs sute of mast	110- 0-0
1766.	David Whitmore Credit to your account rendred in for nine schooners work to one half & sundry other jobs ..	292-18-0

Approximately 130 separate accounts are recorded in his book, and some ran for months, even years, before settlement was made. For example, this is quoted: "Thomas Greenleaf Credit to your account brought in for work to from 1765 to 1774 £763-8-5."

Settlements were entered from time to time in the following style:

Newbury Port August ye 24, 1765 then Reckned & cettled with Ephrem Hunt and ther was Due to him one hundred & nine pounds four shillings & one penny old tenner.

(Signed) Ephram Hunt
Gideon Woodwell

From these scattered and incomplete notes it is apparent that much of the work on vessels was done by men not regularly employed in the yard. Also that it was common practice to share, or sublet, portions of the work. It is difficult to understand how such fractional sections as "planking one third of a side" and "building two thirds of one half of a ship 211 tons" could have been handled smoothly. All work on a vessel must have been well fitted together, and the construction tied in as the work proceeded. There is no record of a written contract and no indication of a dispute, when settlements were made, over proper completion of the designated share of work. Both parties must have acted in good faith. All things needful were provided by the yard in which the work was done and the construction was

supervised. Shipwrights and ship carpenters learned their trades by serving as apprentices.

Other information about the Woodwell shipyard has been collected from various sources. Mrs. Emery, in the book previously quoted, says: "Mr. Gideon Woodwell owned a yard near the foot of Muzzey's lane, now Marlborough street, in 1759." His accounts show that he built one half of a ship, 180 tons, for Mr. Nelson in that year and charged Joseph Cottle's account £850, which construction required four months. He had two apprentices as early as 1757. One of them, Nathaniel Hunt, like many of his kind, married a daughter of the boss in 1760—their grandsons worked in the same shipyard ninety years later.

In her *History of Newburyport*, published in 1854, Mrs. E. Vale Smith gives a brief reference to this shipyard: "Mr. Woodwell, grandfather of Captain J. Woodwell, built on the spot which the latter now devotes to the same purpose, fifty-two sail of vessels from the year 1763 to 1773." This would seem a large number for ten years. While she was writing her history the Woodwell yard was in operation and the brothers, John, David, and Gideon, all living; thus it is probable that she received the information from them, or from records then existing.

In the spring of 1762 Captain Gideon Woodwell bought a lot of land from the estate of Robert Mitchell, with a dwelling-house and barn thereon, between the road or way, which is now Water Street in Newburyport and the Merrimack River. This was the shipyard site, rented by him prior to its purchase. At that time there was a small creek which ran down Woodwell Avenue, on the other side of Water Street, and across the lot to the river; the boats were built on the banks of this stream and launched at high tide.

A ship's bell, mounted in the yard, called the men to work. It was the custom almost to the last days to strike this bell at eleven o'clock in the morning, whereupon the men would drop their tools, gather around the pump, and be served a cup of grog. This custom followed the practice in the Navy and on merchant ships. Another custom was that of serving a lunch at the launching, often called a "treat for the carpenters." It consisted of grog, cheese, and crackers until lemonade was substituted for the grog. The cost ranged from one to four dollars, and was usually charged to the owner, with the extras.

No building yards were located lower down the Merrimack on the Newbury side, for the broadening river left wide flats un-

covered at low tide and too shallow for navigation at high. Next above the Woodwell yard was one started at an early date by Ralph Cross, and continued many years by his sons Stephen and Ralph and grandson William. Beyond this was a yard occupied by Samuel Moggaridge as early as 1741 and later by Jacob Coffin. Nearby was the Johnson yard, or yards, where William and Thomas Johnson built vessels prior to 1700, continued by William's son Eleazer and grandson Philip. It will be noticed that the business sometimes passed from father to sons.

During the period of the Revolutionary War shipbuilding was almost suspended, except for privateers and war vessels. Many privateers were built and owned in Newburyport; at first these returned with large and valuable prizes, but later their losses were disastrous.

The Woodwell yard was idle until 1783. Captain Gideon Woodwell commanded a company of militia who marched from Newbury on the alarm of the 19th of April, 1775 (Lexington and Concord) to Cambridge, and returned after a few days, with leave. In 1777, at the age of fifty-seven years, he was ship carpenter on the Continental frigate *Boston*, under Capt. Hector McNeil. This ship of twenty-four guns was built by Stephen and Ralph Cross and Jonathan Greenleaf, at Newbury and outfitted at Portsmouth, New Hampshire. Gideon Woodwell, Jr., was also a member of the crew, stationed at the starboard No. 1 gun.

Shipbuilding was resumed in 1783 by Gideon Woodwell. From the year 1783 to 1790 ten vessels were built. John Woodwell, born in 1752, and Enoch Hale, a son-in-law, were associated with Gideon under the firm name of Woodwell & Hale. Gideon Woodwell died in 1790, at the age of seventy years.

No records have been preserved covering the years between 1790 and 1816, and but few facts have been gathered from family notes, town histories, and other publications. The business was carried on by the sons, John and Gideon, Jr., with Enoch Hale as a partner for a number of years. They built for Captain Le Breton the brig *Peter* in 1794, the ship *William P. Johnson* in 1804, and the ship *Hercules* in 1810, as John Currier states in volume ii of his *History of Newburyport*. John Woodwell went to Maine around the turn of the century and spent a few years on the Kennebec river, near Bath, where he built several ships. Gideon Woodwell, Jr., served in the Navy at times, and was ship carpenter on the *Constitution*.

In 1799 John and Gideon Woodwell made a contract with William Cross to build one half of a ship of war to carry sixteen guns. The work was to be completed in five months of winter weather. The original document, in the possession of the Newburyport Historical Society, is revealing of shipbuilding practices of the time. The following is a copy:

Articles of agreement made this twenty-ninth Day of October 1799 between William Cross of Newbury Port on the one part & John Woodwell & Gideon Woodwell of Newbury on the other Witnesseth— Viz that the said John and Gideon agrees to and with sd Cross to build for him in his building yard one half of a Ship of the following Demensions Viz. sixty eight feet keel, twenty-four feet Beam and ten feet six inches hold, four feet or four and a half feet waste as Mr. Leonard Smith may hereafter direct to be pierced for eight Guns of a side, planked with two & a half inch plank, except two Streaks at the floor timber heads the streaks under and above the wale of three inches to have three wales to run the navle Timbers on the Keel, to lay four Dagger knees of a side in the main deck to make three hatches & grub water way round the Deck to ceil up the waste to lay a quarter deck and forecastle to deck to reach the main mast, to build a rail round the forecastle to stanchel the Beams & make a half patent Windlass to do everything as well not mentioned as mentioned that belongs to the carpenters work for a warlike vessel of that size, and to give one day each of the Partners to Launch sd Vesil & the sd John & Gideon agrees to build & compleat in a neat & workmanlike manner the sd one half of sd ship on or before the last day of April next. In consideration of which sd Cross agrees to find Timber plank & stuff of every kind necessary, Likewise agrees to pay sd Woodwells seven Dollars pr tun for sd one half of sd Vessel in the manner following Viz one quarter part when raised one quarter part when planked under the wale one quarter when the main deck is laid & the remainder when sd Vessel is compleated likewise one Barrill N E Rum To the true & Faithful performance of the above written obligation the Parties bind themselves to the other in the Sum of one hundred Dollars.

W. CROSS
J. WOODWELL
G. WOODWELL

From the records a few generalizations can be drawn about the first half-century of Woodwell shipbuilding. But little capital was needed. All ships were built on order and the owners settled in cash and goods when the ship was launched. Materials were paid for when these funds came in. Workmen received some cash, provisions, clothing, and goods on account, and from time to time these accounts would be balanced and settled. There was no bank at that place until 1800, but money was loaned by merchants and traders. Few businesses were incorporated prior to 1850. It was a time when all industry was carried on by many

individuals and families without thought of consolidation or expansion.

Certain jobs in shipyard work were specialized in those early days. Caulking, painting, ironwork, rigging, and sailmaking were not done by employees of the yard, who shaped and fitted the timbers, planked the sides and decks, and performed all carpenter work. Not many ship carpenters were needed for a single vessel; but when two or more vessels were under construction at the same time, the force was increased. Since the actual building was carried on in the open, many days' work must have been lost because of weather conditions, particularly during New England winters.

There are wide differences between the work of the ship carpenter and that of the house carpenter. While the ordinary carpenter deals mainly with planes, right angles, and square corners, the ship carpenter has to do with curved surfaces, varying angles and bevelled edges. Ships' knees were cut from trees having branches at proper angles, and a section of the tree was hewn and planed to form the knee in a single piece. Planks were shaped to the ships' curves, and edges slightly bevelled to form joints throughout which would prove water-tight after caulking. The curvature of the ribs varied from bow to stern. Much of the ship carpenter's work was done with an adz, a tool little used by house carpenters. It was essential that the entire construction be staunch enough to withstand the tossing and pounding of heavy seas.

A successful launching required great care and skill. While a wooden ship is easy and graceful on the water, it is an unwieldy structure on land. It had to be held in even balance when sliding down the ways. The builders and workmen must have taken satisfaction in the constructive work of their hands as it advanced from day to day toward completion, climaxed by the launching.

The years 1807-14 were hard on the shipbuilding industry in Newburyport, as elsewhere. The Embargo and other restrictions on trade almost suspended shipping, and consequently depressed shipbuilding. A great fire in 1811 struck a fateful blow at Newburyport's commercial prosperity. The war of 1812 further crippled the industry. Captain John Woodwell commanded, and his brothers David and Gideon were members of, one of eight companies of militia raised and trained in Newbury for the defense of the seacoast of Essex County.

After the War (1812-14), with its depression, John Woodwell with his sons, John, David, and Gideon, resumed shipbuilding. Following his death in 1822 the business was continued by the sons, in partnership, until 1852.

An account book containing complete details of operations from 1816 to 1829 was in existence until recent years, but cannot now be found. Notes copied from this book show that the firm constructed more than forty vessels during that time, an average of three each year. In 1820 they built a small sloop at the rate of \$15 per ton. The schooner *Herald*, 74 tons, was built for Benjamin W. Hale at the rate of \$17.50 per ton in 1825, and in 1826 they were paid \$22 per ton for the *Swiftsure*. The rate continued at around \$20 until 1832 when it increased to \$24 per ton, and finally in 1852, the tonnage rate was \$33.

The *Statesman* (1828) and the *Wellfleet* (1829), with some others, were of a type known as "Pinkstern" or "Pinky." The distinguishing feature of this modified schooner was that instead of having the usual broad, square stern, its stern was narrowed along the lines of a yacht. This gave the craft faster sailing qualities, an advantage in making the long sail to the fishing banks and return. However, there was some reduction in deck room and storage space below decks. Because of its greater speed it was a favorite with sailors.

The Parker River Bridge in Newbury was rebuilt by the Woodwells in 1827 at a cost of \$1,380, equaling the price of a seventy-ton schooner. This bridge had been constructed originally, in 1758, by another shipbuilder, Ralph Cross, with funds raised by a lottery. It was eight hundred and seventy feet long, twenty-six feet wide, with nine piers and eight wooden arches.

A book kept from 1829 to 1852 by John Woodwell, who was manager as well as bookkeeper, furnishes detailed costs and sums paid for thirty-five vessels built in the yard. The following itemized statement for one vessel, copied from the book, shows how the records were kept and the cost of items used:

Newbury November 24, 1834.

The Vessel building for David Wiley in Company with my Brothers David & Gideon.		Dls. cts.
Nov. 24.	to 87-1/2 pounds of Okum at 5-1/2 pr lb	4 81
	to Cash paid for horse hire	1 27
26.	to Expenses to Haverhill	2 04
28.	to Cash paid for two mauls	2 25
	to pint of oil 12 1/2 and postage 22 1/2	35
29.	to Cash paid Caleb Woodwell for teaming	75

Dec.	2.	to Cash paid Paul Little for 2 knees	1 00
	3.	to 34-1/2 pounds of Okum at 5-1/2 pr lb	1 90
	5.	to 6 pounds of Okum at 5-1/2 pr lb.	33
	9.	to 42-1/4 pounds of Okum at 5-1/2 pr lb.	2 32
	11.	to 31 pounds of Okum at 5-1/2 pr lb.	1 61
	12.	to Cash paid Moses Cheney for Labour	67
		to Cash paid for surveying plank	47
	16.	to Cash paid for trucking iron	33
	17.	to Cash paid Mr. Rodgers for rising timbers	7 50
		to three brooms	25
	18.	to Cash paid for plank timber and copper	103 57
		to one auger	69
	29.	to 2 files and one auger	82
Jan. 1, 1835		to 4 augers from Mr. Grainger	92
	6.	to Cash paid John Hunt	3 00
	7.	to Isaac Hunt 6 pounds of butter at 18 pr. lb.	1 08
		to Nathaniel Hunt 7 1/2 butter " " " "	1 35
	8.	to 92-1/4 pounds of Okum at 5-1/2 pr lb.	5 07
	14.	to 47-1/4 pounds of Okum " " " "	2 60
	16.	to 5-1/2 pounds of Okum " " " "	30
	19.	to 24 pounds of Okum " " " "	1 32
	21.	to 19 pounds of Okum " " " "	1 04
	26.	to Cash paid Nathaniel Hunt	5 00
		to 387-1/2 pounds of old spikes at 4 pr lb.	15 50
	29.	to 46 pounds of Okum at 5-1/2 pr lb.	2 52
		to Cash paid Jonathan Merrill for timber	14 87
		to 2 augers & 2 gimblets	3 07
		to Cash paid John Hunt	3 00
	31.	to Cash paid Caleb Woodwell for teaming	75
Feb.	4.	to Cash paid for 57 pounds of Okum	2 00
	6.	to Cash paid for fixing 2 augers & 3 chisels	56
	11.	to Cash paid John Hunt	1 00
		to Cash paid Nathaniel Hunt	5 00
		to 3 brooms	25
	14.	to 2 thousand of punches	1 00
	17.	to Cash paid Pike Noyes for timber	12 75
		to one thousand of punches	50
	19.	to James Shorts bill for timber	35 92
	21.	to Cash paid John Hunt	2 00
	24.	to John Plumer for timber	9 50
	25.	to Cash paid Isaac Hunt	4 00
		to Cash paid Nathaniel Hunt	2 00
		to George Grangers bill for plank & hauling	5 95
	27.	to 4 pounds of Okum & postage	45
Mar.	2.	to Nathaniel Hunt one half bushel beans	92
		to Cash E. Randell for timber	2 62
	5.	to Cash paid for Nathaniel Hunts taxes	2 10
	11.	to Cash paid Nathaniel Hunt	3 00
		to Josiah Little for timber	6 37
	13.	to B. R. Knaps bill for composition spikes	46 04
	14.	to Cash paid William Rodgers for knees	5 00

	to Cash paid John Hunt	2 00
24.	to Cash paid for hauling plank	1 00
27.	to Cash paid John Hunt	2 00
28.	to Cash paid Mr. Coffin for knees	11 75
30.	to Cash paid Mr. Keyes for knees	1 00
31.	to Cash paid Nathaniel Hunt	2 00
	to Cash paid Silas Lunt	3 00
Apr. 6.	to Cash paid B. Porter for hauling plank	75
	to 6 fies	56
8.	to 13-1/4 pounds of Okum at 5-1/2 cts	73
	to Cash paid Charles Lunt	3 00
10.	to 3 knees	1 50
11.	to Cash paid John Hunt	1 00
	to 2 quarts of oil	25
	to cash paid Mr. Rodgers for knees	5 75
	to Cash paid Silas Lunt	5 00
14.	to 2 plane irons	50
	to Cash paid for timber	5 00
16.	to Obediah Hortens bill for keelpieces	18 75
	to one plank 93 cts & hauling 16 cts	1 09
21.	to A. Williams bill for boards	27 65
	to Cash paid Mr. Somerby for plugs	50
	to Cash paid Charles Lunt	10 00
	to Cash paid John Hunt	1 00
23.	to Cash paid Silas Lunt	6 50
	to one bbl of rosin & hauling	2 17
	to Cash paid Joel Adams	10 00
25.	to Cash paid John Hunt	1 00
	to Cash paid Mr. Somerby for plugs	4 50
28.	to Cash paid John Patten for timber	153 30
29.	to Michael Wormstead for horsehire	2 00
	to Benjamin Perkins picking up timber	1 00
	to Cash for hauling plank	20
	to Cash paid Nathaniel Hunt	5 00
May 2.	to Cash paid Silas Lunt on windlass	10 00
4.	to 3-1/2 pounds of Okum	18
	to 76 feet birch boards	1 52
6.	to 8 pounds of nails at 7 pr lb.	56
7.	to paid for hauling boards	17
	to William Gunnisons bill for horsepipes	2 59
	to Cash paid Silas Lunt	5 00
14.	to crackers & cheese for Launching	75
16.	to Samuel Hales bill for white lead	1 25
	to Cash paid on Silas Lunts bill	15 00
		671 98

Newbury May 14th 1835.

David Wiley Dr.

to building Schr Chariot 78 tons at \$29. pr ton	\$2262.00
to shipping half patent windlass	6.50
to treating Carpenters	1.68
	<u>2270.18</u>

Newbury May 18th 1835.

Account of Cash paid out of the whole sum
received on David Wiley's Schr. Chariot.

	Dls. cts.
to on Isaac Hunts bill Labour	79 00
to J. N. Wells bill for patent Lights	3 37
to William Johnsons bill for Labour	26 66
to George Grangers bill for Lumber	36 24
to R. B. Knaps bill braces pintals & horseleads	39 74
to William Ashby bill for Iron & freight on Copper	48 19
to David Hunt for a table	2 75
to Ebenezer Plumer bill for rum & nails	13 00
to Amos Little for hauling timber	2 00
to on Benjamin Pettingells bill for Labour	55 86
to on John Hunts bill for Labour	41 63
to on Nathaniel Hunts bill for Labour	10 81
to William Hervey bill for Lumber	5 40
to Titcomb & Lunt for pine Timber	5 12
to John Dodge bill for Tallow	1 35
to Josiah Thing's bill for Ironwork	94 72
to Joseph Wilson's bill for Carving	14 50
to Joel Adams bill for Joinerswork	18 00
to Benjamin Pearson bill for plank	73 77
to Isaac Knaps bill for Caulking	52 00
Received	\$2270.18
Cost	1298.09
Profit	972.09

Building from Nov. 24, 1834 to May 18, 1835; approximately six months.

The selection below, from the account book, classifies the cost
of building a schooner:

William Gunnison & Son. Schooner Herald—93-79/95 tons at
\$33.00 per ton \$3112.23
(Built from Nov. 1850 to July 1851)

Costs.	
Timber, plank, knees, etc.	\$828.17
Iron	49.80
Copper	124.00
Treenails, spikes, nails, etc.	39.13
Tools	4.66
Labor	93.17
Teaming	26.87
Painting	75.00
Caulking	72.15
Ironwork	147.15
Windlass and bitts	30.00
Dock-rent	3.50
	1493.60

	3112.23
	1493.60
Profit	1618.63

The labor cost is low, probably for the reason that six members of the family worked in the yard, and apparently all shared in the "profits" instead of being paid wages. If an even division was made, each share was but \$270 for approximately eight months' work.

From the extant records some generalizations can be drawn about the shipbuilding business of the Woodwells in the last half-century of operation. The amount of capital invested in the business was small. The family owned the shipyard lot and dwelling-house, which had been enlarged, from the time of its purchase in 1762. They maintained a varying stock of lumber and supplies, often buying materials when available, although no ship was under construction at the time. The industry was practically self-supporting. The balance received from the sale of a vessel provided sufficient funds to pay the running expenses while building the next one, and contract work and extra costs were paid after its completion. While the profits were not large, they gave a fair income to several large families over a long period of years.

The exact gain on a single vessel cannot be determined, since the firm members did not charge for their own labor and no inventories were taken before or after the job. The word "profit" as they used it was evidently what remained after payments to others had been made.

Twenty-one vessels were constructed and six repaired during the decade 1829-1839. The total received from building (not including the repairs) was \$31,231.63. Total expenses posted in the book were \$14,678.84, showing a "profit" of \$16,552.79, which would average \$1,655.27 annually.

From 1840 to 1852, fourteen vessels were built and eight repaired. Two were described as "packet schooners." The amount received from building alone was \$34,341.43, and total costs were \$16,092.80. The average "profit" during this period was \$1,520.82 per year.

These figures are shown at the values existing a hundred and more years ago. Some suggestion of the purchasing power of the dollar may be derived from house rents at the time. From 1830 to 1837 Benjamin G. Hunt, a workman, rented a furnished front room in the Woodwell house at \$14 a year. The Isaac Hunt house, owned by the family, was rented from 1844 to 1847 at \$32 annually. George W. Woodwell rented the large house on

the shipyard lot from 1851 to 1858 at \$24 a year, and John Woodwell, Jr. had it from 1858 to 1861 at \$36 a year. Ship carpenters were paid \$1.25 a day in 1830, and \$1.50 in the later years. Judging from these rents and other current prices, it would seem that the purchasing value of one dollar between 1800 and 1850 was about the equivalent of ten dollars today.

LIST OF SCHOONERS BUILT FROM 1830 TO 1852.

Year	Owner	Name	Tonnage	Price Paid
1830.	David Wiley	Metamora	52-48/95	\$1402.34
1830.	Jeremiah Plummer	Mary	Repairs	85.15
1830.	Samuel Hale	Caleb	"	57.97
1831.	Nichols Tower	Pamela	60-45/95	1241.00
1831.	Henry Baker	Herald	48	1101.25
1831.	William Newcomb	Mahala	40	810.12
1832.	Elisha Smith	Emerald	45-1/4	961.21
1832.	Enoch Osgood & others	George	46-1/2	942.25
1832.	Charles Currier	Palm	47	974.75
1832.	Ezekiel Young	Wabash	56-1/2	1565.58
1833.	William Goodwin	Three Friends	Repairs	99.34
1833.	Philip Coombs	Pilot	81-3/4	2079.80
1833.	Benjamin Oliver	Majestic	100	2485.41
1834.	Joseph Thurlow	Emerald	40	849.00
1834.	David & Isaac Hale	Goahead	42-1/2	985.00
1835.	David Wiley	Chariot	78	2270.18
1835.	Thomas Newcomb	Fremont	About 70	1985.00
1835.	Samuel Brookings	Enterprise	Repairs	49.70
1836.	Henry Baker	Merchant	About 70	2024.00
1837.	Elisha Wetherall	Montano	About 70	1952.23
1837.	Isaac Rider	Denmark	About 70	1991.75
1838.	Freeman A. Baker	Watchman	50-1/2	1665.94
1838.	Benjamin Goodwin	?	Repairs	61.44
1838.	?	Seaflower	"	44.28
1839.	Samuel Atwood	Sultana	About 40	1149.35
1839.	Richard A. Freeman	Damascus	About 70	1974.50
1840.	Ezekiel Young	Palestine	About 40	1250.00
1840.	Benjamin F. Swett	Mary Clark	105	3117.48
1841.	Cornelius Hamblin	Mariner	Repairs	68.87
1841.	Moses Chase	Enterprise	"	14.36
1843.	?	Turkish Rover	"	33.33
1844.	Richard A. Freeman	Marengo	74-1/2	2162.09
1845.	James A. Gorham	Gamaliel	67-3/4	1982.25
1845.	Isaac Paine	Pavilion	74-1/2	2324.17
1846.	Nichols Tower	Mary Hames	74-1/2	2265.00
1846.	Ambrose Snow	William Bacon	63-3/4	2136.30
1847.	William Gunnison	Hannah Grant	104	3474.80
1847.	Moses Pettingell, Charles H. Ireland & Joseph A. Woodwell	Far West	56	1745.00
1848.	Charles Lunt	Empire	100	3105.00

1848.	Freeman A. Hickman	Cellen Maria	About 80	2470.01
1849.	John Wood & Son	Louisa	Repairs	574.43
	"	Iowa	"	91.74
1849.	James Woodbury	Wm. A. Tarlton	"	97.78
1849.	Charles Currier	Acton	"	126.45
1849.	"	Palm	"	474.04
1850.	William Burke	Edmund Burke	About 60	1820.00
1850.	Charles Currier	Acton	Repairs	52.77
1851.	William Gunnison	Herald	93-79/95	3112.23
1852.	David & Isaac Hale	Huntress	102	3376.60

Source: This list was compiled from the original account book of the Woodwells for the period. The price does not include equipment or fitting, but it does include coppering.

The *Huntress*, 102 tons, constructed for David & Isaac Hale in 1852, was the last vessel built in the Woodwell yard after more than ninety years of operation by four generations of the family. The whole number built exceeded one hundred and fifty. But the increasing use of steam power, and the change to steel construction, spelled the doom of wooden sailing ships.

The brothers, John, David, and Gideon, heads of the firm, were all more than sixty years of age in 1852 and unable to continue the heavy tasks of moving and placing ship's timbers. They decided to retire and the business was terminated.

During the later years of operation six young Woodwells of the fourth generation entered the yard to be trained by their fathers. The precise reasons that none of these men attempted to carry on the old established business are unknown. Some of those persons who worked in the yard, or recalled its last years of activity, have stated that the three brothers were extremely conservative and carried on in the old tradition, adhering to the methods handed down by their father and grandfather. Their location limited the size of their vessels. More progressive builders improved their tools and equipment, made various innovations, and operated successfully for thirty years longer. Possibly the Woodwells lacked the capital or the courage to revolutionize their technique, change their site, and continue to compete in the face of doubtful profits. The same fate has overtaken many long-established, inherited concerns.

Two of the younger Woodwells continued at their trade as ship carpenters all their lives, working in yards at Lynn and Boston. Another went to sea. One, who had left the firm because of a dispute with his father over the abolition question, fished on the Banks till he had enough capital to purchase a

hardware store, and later was a shipowner. One went into the express business, and one became, first, a farmer and later a hotel proprietor. Several Hunt brothers, who had worked with the Woodwells, continued to work in the shipyards at Newburyport for many years, being listed in the city directories as ship carpenters and ship joiners. Thus, those who continued in shipbuilding did so as skilled workers only.

The Newburyport *Daily Herald* published this editorial on April 18, 1861:

THE WOODWELL BROTHERS

The death of Mr. John Woodwell, which we recorded on Saturday last, leaves but one survivor of the well known firm of John, David, and Gideon Woodwell, who from 1821 until 1853 were engaged in the construction of vessels at their shipyard near the foot of Marlborough Street, and who from 1800 to 1821 were associated with their father, Mr. John Woodwell, in that business, on the same locality.

During this period, of upwards of fifty years, the Woodwells,—father, sons, and several of the third generation—were celebrated for their mechanical skill and their integrity of character. During the half century, they built and launched from their yard upwards of one hundred vessels, varying in size from 40 to 350 tons; and the thoroughness and faithfulness of their work has been universally acknowledged by those who have purchased or sailed in the staunch vessels which have come from their hands. No sailor's life was ever perilled by unfaithful workmanship on their part, and they were always as careful in selecting sound materials for their work as if their own lives depended upon its ability to endure the rough trials of tempestuous seas. Their unswerving honesty in their dealings inspired such confidence that persons who furnished them with building materials would often rely solely upon their measurements.

* * * * *

The era of wooden ships has passed, and the skill of the builder and carpenter are lost arts; but the shipbuilding industry was in its time an important one in its contribution to the growth and prosperity of America.

WILLIAM H. WOODWELL,
Tamaqua, Pennsylvania.

A Seventeenth Century Shoemaker's Account Book

Mrs. Christine Adams Jones has recently presented to the Business Historical Society a rare little account book of one of her ancestors. It was kept by Jacob Adams, a farmer-shoemaker of Newbury, Massachusetts, between the years 1673 and 1693. In an article about this account book in the issue of the BULLETIN of December, 1935, Mrs. Blanche Hazard Sprague, the outstanding authority on early shoemaking in this region,¹ writes that "these accounts represented (by 95 years) the oldest first-hand records of shoemaking in New England which I had ever seen in my continuous research since 1906 on the shoe industry in this region."

The book constitutes a rare record of early American business. Sketchy though it is and difficult as it is to decipher, it affords not a little insight into a particular trade, that of the shoemaker, and indeed it suggests much about how the business of the colonial village was carried on. Such fragments, which the historian pieces together, are the indispensable materials for reconstructing the economic life of those early times.

¹ See her book entitled *The Organization of the Boot and Shoe Industry in Massachusetts before 1875* (Cambridge, 1921).

Meeting of the Council of the Business Historical Society

The annual meeting of the Council of the Society was held at the Parker House in Boston on May 8. The following members were present: Messrs. Adams, David, Gras, Higgins, and Kiley, Council members, and Mr. Navin, Clerk.

The Executive Secretary summarized the minutes of the last

meeting of the Council, held April 11, 1946, and presented the Society's financial statements as well as its budget for the coming year. Both were received with approval, and the increase in membership was noted favorably.

Election of officers took place and the following personnel was reelected: President: John W. Higgins; Vice-President: N. S. B. Gras; Executive Secretary: Thomas R. Navin, Jr.; Assistant Executive Secretary: Elsie H. Bishop; Editor of the BULLETIN: Henrietta M. Larson; Assistant Editor of the BULLETIN: Elsie H. Bishop; Librarian: Arthur H. Cole; Executive Committee: the President, the Vice-President, and the Executive Secretary; Program and Publication Committee: the Vice-President, the Editor of the BULLETIN, and the Executive Secretary.

The Vice-President reported on the Society's publication of the BULLETIN and of *Commercial Broadcasting Pioneer: The W.E.A.F. Experiment, 1922-26*; he also reported the progress made toward the publication of the *House of Baring* and the *Guide to Business History*.